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EIGHTY POEMS  
AN ANTHOLOGY



# EIGHTY POEMS

## AN ANTHOLOGY

EDITED BY L. A. G. STRONG

Author of 'Dublin Days'  
'The Lowery Road'

OXFORD: BASIL BLACKWELL

1924

PRINTED AND MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN AT  
THE SHAKESPEARE HEAD PRESS  
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

## Foreword

THE facts are these.

Mr Basil Blackwell has been publishing verse assiduously for years. He has in fact published so much of it that his literary and commercial discrimination may well have been questioned, and people may have wondered whether such catholic enthusiasm was really a service to literature.

These doubts are best answered by taking stock of all this verse and examining the proportion of hits and misses.

Hits are of three kinds:— to be the regular publisher for acknowledged writers: to have introduced to the public writers since acknowledged: and to have published for writers not yet acknowledged as they should be. A glance at the list of contents will record many hits of the first and second kind, and I hope a perusal of the book will reveal several of the third. For this is the book's real purpose,—not merely to commemorate Mr Blackwell's faith in modern verse.

This is often called a smallage of poetry, carefully following in the pioneer trails of its great forbears and rendering them safe for motor traffic. But alas, the moral fingerposts which pointed their way for them are turned awry for us, and the smoke of war has overclouded their shining certainties. All we can be sure of is that there are many things best left



## FOREWORD

alone. 'If you can't be good be careful,' may be sound post-war sense, but it is not the motto for a Shelley or a Blake.

Still, there is nothing to worry about. The poets must be given time, that is all. They must fumble awhile amongst the ruins of their house before they build anew.

Therecent flood of autobiographical novels, mostly concerned with school and young manhood, has received much censure; but they performed their useful function. Their candour, their helpless clinging to stark fact, their frequent failure to assimilate reporting with fiction, were valuable just because it was fact to which they clung and actual physical experience they reported. (I call it physical, in contrast to imaginative, experience.) They added to the sum of human knowledge, to man's understanding of his fellow man. There are times when it is more important for us to know how our neighbour feels than to appreciate him as an artist.

So the poets have been playing their honourable part, as the littlest poets in far littler ages have played theirs. For poetry is not the affair of a century or an age: it goes on all the time. Every poet, however insignificant, pours in his honest little contribution to the common stock, from which his successors will help themselves as they please.

Thus in the future men studying—maybe by the light of Henry Adams—this outermost rim of a material epoch, will note with sympathy and even

## FOREWORD

with admiration these gallant struggles to keep alive the one language that can order Babel. However poorly they may rate our poets' art, perhaps they will hold that their faith has saved them.

All this, of course, presupposes agreement with the detractors of the age, and sounds as if I held a low opinion of the contents of this book. Except to those who consider brevity a fault, these poems need no apology. They have been chosen simply by the test of pleasure. Each of them seemed to have a definite life and personality of its own; and, while talking of a basis of selection, I suggest with all respect that we are apt nowadays to overrate sheer verbal neatness and adroitness of phrasing. The word technique is too often narrowed down to mean just this flick-of-the-wrist, if one may so term it, which can easily degenerate into a visible and mechanical slickness. The highest degree of finish must of course be sought by the poet working in a small compass, and the function of this age may be to polish weapons for the next: but the file cannot do everything. May not a poem be liked for its personality, however awkwardly that personality is expressed? (Are all the new poets we are fond of highly skilled in expressing their personal quality? Yet we do not therefore doubt our right to be fond of them.) Otherwise—not to muddle the question by emotional analogies—may the rough ore of a more generous metal please better than the wrought finish of a less?

Needless to say the fine ore *ought* to be beautifully

## FOREWORD

worked—but suppose in hard fact that it isn't: should the anthologist, anxious dealer in hard fact, reject it for its lack of finish, or retain it for its uncouth innate virtue?

I suppose the only answer is that he must please himself and shut his ears to theories and creeds. 'Form and expression are one and indivisible.' Quite: what about intention and performance? And how many kinds of technique are there? Verbal technique—surface technique—any more?

It is clear then that the anthologist must go easy with his theories. He is a showman, calling attention to the merits of others; that happiest of critics, whose duty is always to commend. When he is pleased he says so: and, provided it does not degenerate into a mere amiability, the wider his range of pleasure the better for his readers. I would wish him, hating only dishonesty and lifelessness, to forget his opinions and enjoy with open mind. If he attempt to write verse himself, he must have certain prepossessions. Let him put these aside and give others the courteous hearing he would desire for himself.

In this connection it is *unfair* to say that two gentlemen and three ladies have disagreed with my selection from their work. The gentlemen and one of the ladies merely raised their eyebrows: the remaining ladies protested and offered emendations. I tried my hardest, but I could not agree with them: and so, with very great courtesy and kindness, they allowed me to have my way and print my original

## FOREWORD

choice. I honestly think the poems printed will represent them more happily to the general reader than those they themselves selected; and, to be consistent, I asked a friend to select those of my own verses which are included, distrusting my own preference.

The books from which, owing to the number of good things in them, I found it difficult to make a choice, were those of Mr Wilfred Rowland Childe, Mr Frank Pearce Sturm, and Miss Edith Sitwell. Of the books which by reason of their structure could not be represented, I would specially commend to readers Mr Clifford Bax's *The Traveller's Tale*, a book which flashes into wild beauty of a kind seldom seen in these days.

The kindness of all contributors has made the compiling of this book a pleasant labour. Many of the poems are old friends which have been happily in my mind for years, and it is a joy to bear them this witness. Finally, I owe my best thanks to Mr Adrian Mott, who has helped me over all difficulties and done a great deal of my work for me.

# Contents

CLAUDE COLLEER ABBOTT	
Wantons	page 1
J. REDWOOD ANDERSON	
The Hay	2
JANE BARLOW	
Sorrow for One	3
CLIFFORD BAX	
Unbuilding	4
The Ship	6
BLAIR	
The Life and Death of Mrs Tidmuss	7
J. M. BLAKE	
Music	9
EDMUND BLUNDEN	
The Scythe	11
R. CAMPBELL	
Bongwi's Theology	14
WILFRED ROWLAND CHILDE	
The Descent of the Dreamer	15
The Recognition	17
Age Gothique Doré	18
The Gothic Rose	19
RICHARD CHURCH	
The Lantern	20
OSWALD COULDREY	
Monsoon failure	21

# CONTENTS

A. S. CRIPPS	
Love Pagan	page 22
After Three Years	23
GERALD CROW	
Ad sanctum Geraldum pro nautis ejus	24
OLIVER DAVIES	
Time	25
On the Embankment	26
VIVIENNE DAYRELL	
To the Unknown	27
Late May	28
ERIC DICKINSON	
River Song	29
CAMILLA DOYLE	
The Rabbit	30
ESTHER LILIAN DUFF	
A Kalendar	31
T. W. EARP	
To a Southern Gentleman	32
The Gate of Bronze	33
The Caliph Walks	34
ELEANOR FARJEON	
Sonnet	35
The Girl with the Ball	36
MOIREEN FOX	
From 'Liadain and Curithir'	37

# CONTENTS

H. REX FRESTON	
To...	page 39
To...	40
H. W. GARROD	
The Garden	41
LOUIS GOLDING	
Portrait of an Artist	42
GERALD GOULD	
Alien Enemies	43
Song	45
ROBERT GRAVES	
Sullen Moods	46
DESMOND HARMSWORTH	
The Diver	48
ROGER HEATH	
The Soul	49
RICHARD HUGHES	
Gratitude	52
ALDOUS HUXLEY	
Mole	54
A Little Memory	56
C. H. B. KITCHIN	
Chinese Night	57
MARGARET RIVERS LARMINIE	
Genesis	58
VERA LARMINIE	
The Shadow	59

# CONTENTS

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN	
Gigantic Doctor	page 60
The Finger	61
SUSAN MILES	
The Parson's Wife: A Reaction	62
F. ST V. MORRIS	
Procrastination	68
J. S. MUIRHEAD	
Epigram	69
V. de S. PINTO	
Art	70
FRANK PREWETT	
The Winds caress the Trees	71
EDGELL RICKWORD	
Intimacy	72
MORLEY ROBERTS	
Despair	73
DOROTHY L. SAYERS	
Carol	74
FREDEGOND SHOVE	
Song	75
EDITH SITWELL	
Serenade	76
The King of China's Daughter	77
OSBERT SITWELL	
'Therefore is the name of it called Babel'	78
SACHEVERELL SITWELL	
'Psittachus eo is imitatrix ales ab Indis'	80
The Nightingale	81



# CONTENTS

BENVENUTA SOLOMON	
The Tower Unbuilt	page 82
Human Sacrifice	83
ANTHONY STEEL	
Odyssey IX	84
DOROTHEA STILL	
Discontent	85
L. A. G. STRONG	
Lowery Cot	86
Zeke	87
F. PEARCE STURM	
White Cranes	88
Still-heart	89
An Offering at the Tomb	90
MALCOLM TAYLOR	
Even-Song	98
E. WYNDHAM TENNANT	
Home-Thoughts in Laventie	100
KATHARINE TYNAN	
The Childless Woman	102
The Ass of Heaven	104
SHERARD VINES	
Little Grey Devil	105
WILLOUGHBY WEAVING	
Boar's Hill	106
Moments of Vision	109
HUMBERT WOLFE	
The Little Sleeper	111
Pierrot	112-

# Acknowledgement

**A** FEW of the poems in this collection, after first appearing in Mr Blackwell's annual publication, *Oxford Poetry*, have since been included by their authors in volumes under the imprint of other publishers. Grateful acknowledgement is made for kind permission to reprint the following poems:

To Messrs Chatto and Windus for 'Babel' by Osbert Sitwell; Messrs Christopher's for 'Song,' from *Shepherd Singing Ragtime*, by Louis Golding; R. Cobden Sanderson, Esq., for 'The Scythe,' from *The Shepherd*, by Edmund Blunden; The Golden Cockerel Press for 'Gratitude,' from *Gipsy Night*, by Richard Hughes; Messrs William Heineman for 'Sullen Moods,' from *Whipperry*, by Robert Graves; Messrs Sidgwick & Jackson for 'Intimacy' from *Behind the Eyes*, by Edgell Rickword.



# Index of Authors and Bibliography .



# INDEX OF AUTHORS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

*NOTE. The Books mentioned below are published in each case by* BASIL BLACKWELL, OXFORD.

CLAUDE COLLEER ABBOT. <i>From</i> ‘Poems’	
Wantons	page 1
J. Redwood Anderson. <i>From</i> ‘Haunted Islands’	
The Hay	2
Jane Barlow. <i>From</i> ‘Between Doubting & Daring’	
Sorrow for One	3
Clifford Bax. <i>From</i> ‘A House of Words’	
Unbuilding	4
The Ship	6
Blair. <i>From</i> ‘The Life & Death of Mrs Tidmuss’	
Concluding Stanzas	7
J. M. Blake. <i>From</i> ‘Luca della Robbia’	
Music	9
Edmund Blunden. <i>From</i> ‘Oxford Poetry 1921’	
The Scythe struck by Lightning	11
R. Campbell. <i>From</i> ‘Oxford Poetry 1920’	
Bongwi’s Theology	14
Wilfred Rowland Childe. <i>From</i> ‘The Little City’	
The Descent of the Dreamer	15
<i>From</i> ‘The Escaped Princess’	
The Recognition	17

## INDEX OF AUTHORS

Wilfred Rowland Childe. <i>From</i> 'The Gothic Rose'	
Âge Gothique Doré	page 18
The Gothic Rose	19
Richard Church. <i>From</i> 'Philip'	
The Lantern	20
Oswald Couldrey. <i>From</i> 'Thames and Godavery'	
Monsoon Failure	21
A. S. Cripps. <i>From</i> 'Lyra Evangelistica'	
Love Pagan	22
<i>From</i> 'Pilgrimage of Grace'	
After Three Years	23
Gerald Crow. <i>From</i> 'Fifteen Poems'	
Ad Sanctum Geraldum	24
Oliver Davies. <i>From</i> 'Songs and Signs'	
Time	25
On the Embankment	26
Vivienne Dayrell. <i>From</i> 'The Little Wings'	
To the Unknown	27
Late May	28
Eric Dickinson. <i>From</i> 'The Ilex Grove'	
River Song	29
Camilla Doyle. <i>From</i> 'Poems'	
The Rabbit	30
Esther Lilian Duff. <i>From</i> 'Bohemian Glass'	
A Kalendar	31
T. W. Earp. <i>From</i> 'Contacts'	
To a Southern Gentleman	32

## AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

T. W. Earp. <i>From</i> 'The Gate of Bronze'	
The Gate of Bronze	page 33
The Caliph Walks	34
Eleanor Farjeon. <i>From</i> 'Poems and Sonnets'	
Sonnet	35
The Girl with the Ball	36
Moireen Fox. <i>From</i> 'Liadain and Curithur'	
Stanzas	37
H. Rex Freston. <i>From</i> 'Collected Poems'	
To . . .	39
To . . .	40
H. W. Garrod. <i>From</i> 'Worms and Epitaphs'	
The Garden	41
Louis Golding. <i>From</i> 'Oxford Poetry 1921'	
Portrait of an Artist	42
Gerald Gould. <i>From</i> 'The Happy Tree'	
Alien Enemies	43
Song	45
Robert Graves. <i>From</i> 'Oxford Poetry 1921'	
Sullen Moods	46
Desmond Harmsworth. <i>From</i> 'Oxford Poetry 1923'	
The Diver	48
Roger Heath. <i>From</i> 'Beginnings'	
The Soul	49
Richard Hughes. <i>From</i> 'Oxford Poetry 1921'	
Gratitude	52



# INDEX OF AUTHORS

Aldous Huxley. <i>From</i> 'The Burning Wheel'	
Mole	page 54
<i>From</i> 'The Defeat of Youth'	
A Little Memory	56
C. H. B. Kitchin. <i>From</i> 'Curtains'	
Chinese Night	57
Margaret Rivers Larminie. <i>From</i> 'Out of the East'	
Genesis	58
Vera Larminie. <i>From</i> 'Out of the East'	
The Shadow	59
E. H. W. Meyerstein. <i>From</i> 'Mysteria Mundi'	
Gigantic Doctor	60
<i>From</i> 'The Witches' Sabbath'	
The Finger	61
Susan Miles. <i>From</i> 'Dunch'	
The Parson's Wife: A Reaction	62
F. St V. Morris. <i>From</i> 'Poems'	
Procrastination	68
J. S. Muirhead. <i>From</i> 'The Quiet Spirit'	
Epigram	69
V. de S. Pinto. <i>From</i> 'Duality'	
Art	70
Frank Prewett. <i>From</i> 'Oxford Poetry 1921'	
The Winds caress the Trees	71
Edgell Rickword. <i>From</i> 'Oxford Poetry 1920'	
Intimacy	72

## AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Morley Roberts. <i>From</i> 'Lyra Mutabilis'	
Despair	page 73
Dorothy L. Sayers. <i>From</i> 'Catholic Tales'	
Carol	74
Fredegond Shove. <i>From</i> 'Dreams and Journeys'	
Song	75
Edith Sitwell. <i>From</i> 'The Wooden Pegasus'	
Serenade	76
The King of China's Daughter	77
Osbert Sitwell. <i>From</i> 'Wheels 1916'	
'Therefore is the Name of it called Babel'	78
Sacheverell Sitwell. <i>From</i> 'The People's Palace'	
Psittachus eois . . .	80
<i>From</i> 'Wheels 1917'	
The Nightingale	81
Benvenuta Solomon. <i>From</i> 'The Tower Unbuilt'	
The Tower Unbuilt	82
Human Sacrifice	83
Anthony Steele. <i>From</i> 'Oxford Poetry 1922'	
Odyssey IX	84
Dorothea Still. <i>From</i> 'Poems of Motherhood'	
Discontent	85
L. A. G. Strong. <i>From</i> 'The Lowery Road'	
Lowery Cot	86
<i>From</i> 'Dublin Days'	
Zeke	87

# INDEX OF AUTHORS

F. Pearce Sturm. <i>From</i> 'Eternal Helen'	
White Cranes	page 88
Still-Heart	89
An Offering at the Tomb	90
Malcolm Taylor. <i>From</i> 'Poems: Part I'	
Evensong	98
E. Wyndham Tennant. <i>From</i> 'Worple Flit'	
Home-Thoughts in Laventie	100
Katherine Tynan. <i>From</i> 'Evensong'	
The Childless Woman	102
The Ass of Heaven	104
Sherard Vines. <i>From</i> 'The Two Worlds'	
Little Grey Devil	105
Willoughby Weaving. <i>From</i> 'The Star Fields'	
Boar's Hill	106
<i>From</i> 'Daedal Wings'	
Moments of Vision	109
Humbert Wolfe. <i>From</i> 'Shylock reasons with Mr Chesterton'	
The Little Sleeper	111
<i>From</i> 'London Sonnets'	
Pierrot	112

CLAUDE COLLEER ABBOTT

WANTONS.

(For C. O. Harrey.)

UNDER the searching eye of the August sun  
Sighs the delicate, strong wheat.  
Facing his withering might with their bosoms bare  
Flaunt the poppies, indiscreet.  
Unashamed, with seductive charm they sway on,  
Rustling their sinuous stems;  
Languorous lights o'love they lean to be clasped,  
But the blazing sun condemns.  
The wheat stands stiff, resisting the soft caress,  
As blind to the shining flesh;  
The wantons toss their heads with a little curse,  
And darken their brows afresh.  
Conscious of beauty, bold with desire, they dance.  
Flushed with the maddening lilt  
Their laughter ripples; the strong wheat trembles,  
but waits  
Till that bowl of fire be spilt.  
Then furtively ere the August moon shine round,  
The scarlet leans to the gold;  
And interlaced he crushes her warmth to his face  
And joys, till her petals fold.  
She flames her body's pride to the censuring sun  
While her lovers drink her up.  
Her beauty withers and dies, her petals fall;  
They have emptied the cup.

J. REDWOOD ANDERSON  
THE HAY

THE scythe, with long, smooth sweep,  
Swathe after swathe, cuts the fresh grasses,  
And as it passes,  
Swathe after swathe, they fall asleep.  
Stretched in a long irregular row  
Silently the mowers mow,  
The grasses, swiftly bending down,  
Die;  
The grasses lie  
Spread out on either hand,  
In level ridges like the brown  
Sea-sand.

They are so calm before their fate:  
They stand erect, as they would feel,  
Before all kisses come too late,  
The last kiss of the sun;  
The last kiss of the wind that lingers  
Touching them with gentle fingers  
One by one.

They are so calm when they lie dead  
With early dew still wet,  
As they had died with no regret  
And no last word unsaid.

Then,  
One of the men  
Will pause awhile, and you will hear  
The clear  
Hiss of the whetstone on the steel.  
Stretched in a long irregular row  
Silently the mowers mow.

JANE BARLOW

SORROW FOR ONE

SORROW for one: nay, sorrow hath he none,  
His griefs all left behind  
This side the sun,  
Yet mirth for two makes evermore pursue  
The frown of Fate unkind,  
That one shall rue;  
If one be left to bear in mournful mind  
Lost noontide gleams, and how the world went well  
When gloaming fell;  
To ask, nor answer win,  
If, sorrow ended, haply joy begin,  
Threaded as day and night,  
Dark beads and bright,  
On strands the self-same life shall spin.

Was never a spell that could response compel;  
No secret word from any ominous bird;  
Only for wistful vows most vainly stirred  
The woodland stillness with the cushat's croon;  
And ever the cuckoo's echoing crystal bell  
Rings on, a dwindled knell,  
That swims away to dreamful shores of sleep.

Ah wake there, wake a soothfast oracle,  
Or silence keep.

## CLIFFORD BAX

### UNBUILDING

WHILE you played and our fair companion listened,  
I, in the fluttering firelight, all of a sudden  
Felt, as I mused, how much  
Marvellous life  
Slumbered there in the antique room around us.  
Once the rafters under the roof, up-towering  
Spread their leaves to Elizabethan summers.  
Who was it brought them here?  
Men who perhaps  
Heard with terror news of the great Armada.  
When men carved the chairs and the long low table?  
Even the walls were quarried; and once the carpet  
Must have been wrought by girls,  
Happy or sad,  
Kneeling close to a loom in bygone Persia.  
So, no less, in the fire I hear the boisterous  
Hardly human life of the modern miner;  
See, if I lift my head,  
Glimmering glass,  
Twilight-blue,—the familiar wonder of windows.  
Whatsoever I look on bears my fancy  
Back to the time and place of its own beginning,—  
Further and further back  
Into the past,  
Into the primal world of the swamp and forest.

## UNBUILDING

All the past is about me. Suns and planets  
Linger yet in a chair, a book or a garment.  
Even the silent girl  
Near to me now  
Holds the story of all mankind within her.

Travelling down the centuries, like an heirloom,  
Still her beauty endures,—the slender body,  
Wrought of a thousand loves,  
Bearing it on  
Scatheless out of the smoke of tumbled empires.



## CLIFFORD BAX

### THE SHIP

A WINDOW ledge, and a few toy-soldiers marching...  
The boy looks up for a moment as though he listened,  
As though the sea had called his name in a whisper. .  
And out on the sea-line, out on the fervent sea-line,  
A bright ship moves,  
Touching his life on its way from far Bermuda,  
Touching his heart for ever with all romance.

BLAIR

THE LIFE & DEATH OF MRS TIDMUSS

*Concluding Stanzas*

W HATEVER death may be, account it well.  
If Mrs Tidmuss died as flower and tree  
And is no more, or if her spirit dwell  
In unimaginable ecstasy  
Within the lovely bosom of this God,  
Lives now enlightened, learns and serves,—let be!

The unchosen road submissively she trod:  
Strove to discern it, such as were her lights,—  
Strove to endure it, such as she was shod.  
But if this immortality requites  
Her spirit now, then surely shrilled with song  
The infinite spheres at her poor funeral rites.

Through ugly streets jogged the cortège along.  
*(We bring a Queen to most high funeral!)*  
Folk went their ways; there was no gathered throng.  
*(Shout, mortals, and toss roses on the pall!)*  
The sun shone, and the morn was crisp and gay.  
*(Death sets free: it is life that holds in thrall.)*

She passed the shops she bought at every day;  
*(Life is the prisoning clay, and Death the sun;)*  
She passed the turn towards where her old street lay;  
*(Life the strange night, and Death broad day begun;)*  
She passed the peeling chapel in Pond's Road.  
*(Life the gaunt trenches, Death the dim peace won.)*

## *The* LIFE and DEATH of MRS TIDMUSS

The hearse approached her body's last abode;  
(*To whoso fought, Death gives triumphant peace;*)  
The pace was slackened to the formal mode;  
(*Whoso resisted bonds, Death brings release;*)  
Impatient stood the curate, new to Clent.  
(*Whoso was sown, himself is God's increase.*)

Tilly displayed the proper grief she meant;  
(*Blow up, O trumpets of eternity!*)  
Bert Summers thought, 'Well, it was time she went.'  
(*Shout, souls of God, from starry sea to sea!*)  
The children were behaving very well.  
(*Stars, clash your shining shields!—a soul is free!*)

'... Short time to live.' It knocked indeed a knell.  
(*Spoil all the suns to lay her pathway down!*)  
The black men shuffled as they raised the shell.  
(*The deeps undight of colour for her gown!*)  
The cheap scant wreaths lay on the ground aside.  
(*Weld the white lakes of blisses for her crown!*)

'Dust to dust'—and now Tilly really cried.  
(*Most powerful, pitiful flesh, how low thou liest!*)  
We were but earth, and earth was all our pride.  
(*Crumble, O earth, 'tis only thou that diest!*)  
There was a little rattle of gravelly mould...  
(*Comes glory unto Glory in the Highest!*)  
Life's curtain falls, and all the tale is told.

J. M. BLAKE

MUSIC

SOMETIMES, before the day begins, I dream  
Of instruments all bravely cast  
From the full glory of that light  
Which pours its radiant stream  
From the red furnace of the rim of night,  
Played by angelic minstrels massed  
In praise triumphant, round Those Feet  
Where all the Arts of Earth and Heaven meet.

The fettered arts are fain to find content  
In earthly things,  
Things to cajole or labour, shape or twist  
According as they list  
To their imaginings;  
Things pliant or obedient,  
Pigments and syllables, filaments and stone,  
Metal and plastic clay  
Which do obey  
A dominating mind and own  
A Maker's right  
Through them to bring into the light  
Visions which had been pent.

But oh! Ye thin white moon and paling stars!  
How different  
The unconscious skill  
The free, exuberant, creative will  
And tireless energy  
Which fills the little lark that wakens me!  
He has the freedom of the trackless skies,  
He casts his unexpected bars—

## MUSIC

As one who thinks aloud—  
From cloud to listening cloud,  
Forebeckoning our destinies  
The wonder and the sacrament of birth  
Up from the plains of Earth  
And down from Heaven in one emprise.  
And with such fearless confidence  
He upward wings  
And sings  
That the high mountains mutely stand  
Far back in natural obeisance  
To give him wider space  
For the outpouring  
Of his grace.  
While hovering and soaring  
He scatters notes of mirth  
Or paeans grand.  
And at great moments in great hours  
The little sorcerer sets free  
Those fettered arts,  
Marshalling all to take their parts  
In his great artistry,  
And then he stretches, guides or lifts  
According to its gifts  
Or powers,  
Each form and curve, each rhythm and each tint  
And uses every smallest hint  
Of all Earth's richest energies  
To make the hour supreme.

LA CASETTA, MUGELLO.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

THE SCYTHER STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

**A**THICK hot haze had choked the valley grounds  
Long since, the dogday sun had gone his rounds  
Like a dull coal half lit with sulky heat;  
And leas were iron, ponds were clay, fierce beat  
The blackening flies round moody cattle's eyes.  
Wasps on the mudbanks seemed a hornet's size,  
That on the dead roach batted. The plough's increase  
Stood under a curse.

Behold, the far release!  
Old wisdom breathless at her cottage door  
'Sounds of abundance' mused, and heard the roar  
Of marshalled armies in the silent air,  
And thought Elisha stood beside her there,  
And clacking reckoned ere the next nightfall  
She'd turn the looking-glasses to the wall.

Faster than armies out of the burnt void  
The hour-glass clouds innumerably deployed;  
And when the hay-folks next look up, the sky  
Sags black above them; scarce is time to fly.  
And most run for their cottages; but Ward  
The mower for the inn beside the ford,  
And slow strides he with shouldered scythe still bare,  
While to the coverts leaps the great-eyed hare.

As he came in, the dust snatched up and whirled  
Hung high, and like a bell-rope whipped and twirled,  
The brazen light glared round, the haze resolved  
Into demoniac shapes bulged and convolved.

## THE SCYTHE STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

Well might poor ewes afar make bleatings wild,  
Though this old trusting mower sat and smiled,  
For from the hush of many days the land  
Had waked itself: and now on every hand  
Shrill swift alarm-notes, cries and counter-cries,  
Lowings and crowings came and throbbing sighs.  
Now atom lightning brandished on the moor,  
Then out of sullen drumming came the roar  
Of thunder joining battle east and west:  
In hedge and orchard small birds durst not rest,  
Flittering like dead leaves and like wisps of straws,  
And the cuckoo called again, for without pause  
Oncoming voices in the vortex burred.  
The storm came toppling like a wave, and blurred  
In grey the trees that like black steeples towered.  
The sun's last yellow died. Then who but cowered?  
Down ruddying darkness floods the hideous flash,  
And pole to pole the cataract whirlwinds clash.

Alone within the tavern parlour still  
Sat the grey mower, pondering his God's will,  
And flinching not to flame or bolt, that swooped  
With a great hissing rain till terror drooped  
In weariness: and then there came a roar  
Ten-thousand-fold, he saw not, was no more—  
But life bursts on him once again, and blood  
Beats droning round, and light comes in a flood.

## THE SCYTHE STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

He stares, and sees the sashes battered awry,  
The wainscot shivered, the crocks shattered, and nigh,  
His twisted scythe, melted by its fierce foe,  
Whose Parthian shot struck down the chimney. Slow  
Old Ward lays hand to his old working-friend,  
And thanking God Whose mercy did defend  
His servant, yet must drop a tear or two  
And think of times when that old scythe was new,  
And stands in silent grief, nor hears the voices  
Of many a bird that through the land rejoices,  
Nor sees through the smashed panes the sea-green sky,  
That ripens into blue, nor knows the storm is by.



R. CAMPBELL

BONGWI'S THEOLOGY

**T**HIS is the wisdom of the ape  
Who yelps beneath the moon—  
'Tis God who made me in this shape;  
He is a great baboon.  
'Tis he who tilts the moon askew  
And fans the forest trees:  
The Heavens, which are broad and blue,  
Provide him his trapeze.  
He swings with tail divinely bent  
Around those azure bars,  
And munches, to his soul's content,  
The kernels of the stars.  
And when I die, his loving care  
Shall raise me from the sod,  
To learn the perfect Mischief there,  
The Nimbleness of God!

WILFRED ROWLAND CHILDE  
THE DESCENT OF THE DREAMER

UNBAR the gates of sleep and let him through:  
For he has drunk all day of things divine,  
The winds, whose soul is wine,  
The rapturous dawn, the redolence of the dew,  
The breathless quiet of the still mid-noon,  
The frankincense of the mysterious flowers,  
The orange flush of evening in the west,  
And thee, O serene moon,  
After the radiant pomp of the long hours,  
Kindling an argent torch, which tells of rest.  
And he has heard sweet music all the day,  
The whispering of the wind among the trees,  
And, seeking the far seas,  
The murmur of the river on its way;  
The harmonies of birds, whose song smites deep  
As stars shivering dark water in a well,  
Birds throned in holy silence of the suns.  
Ah, the high porch of sleep,  
And meadows clothed in dreaming asphodel;  
Towards the doors with eager feet he runs.  
And he has seen around the sundial  
The shapes of fæery flow with linkèd fingers;  
Yet in his spirit lingers  
The sound of their faint music magical.  
The last light comes from blue hills far away;  
Open the towering doors and let him in,  
Into thy hands, O dim and sovran sleep,  
Into thy secret sway,  
Where the whole world is full of irised din,  
And with dumb poppy-petals swathèd deep.

## THE DESCENT OF THE DREAMER

Lo, on his hair a rainbow for a crown,  
A lily in his fingers for a wand  
    To guide his trembling hand  
In the long ways, where roads of fear go down,  
Where mountains hide their peaks amid the stars,  
And in black gulfs below their roots are fast,  
Circling about the eternal gates of hell.  
    In dragon-pinioned cars  
Phantoms of dreams along the ways are cast,  
High-crowned with power, divine, imperishable.  
Yea, in sleep's kingdom there are many things,  
Which no mind knows, of which no tongue can tell,  
    Grievous and terrible,  
As notes of an enchanter's pipe-plings.  
The flushing sunset of the vanished earth  
Fades to wan fires across the vales of sleep,  
And fills the eyes of all therein with flame;  
    And in a shivering birth  
Forth from the depth of secret caves there creep  
Creatures too strange to live and bear a name.  
Soon shall he see the torches of dead years  
Go gliding on along the paths of thee,  
    Veiled shape of fantasy,  
And winged woes drifting in a rout of fears:  
Soon with glad, shining eyes and outstretched hands  
Move on with feet of darkness, seeking ever  
Dales of a magic moon-dawn, fierce and free,  
    The unknown, outer lands,  
The long, low sob of the last, loneliest river,  
The silence of the everlasting sea.

WILFRED ROWLAND CHILDE  
THE RECOGNITION

**B**EFORE time came or the great moon was made,  
We walked in a young forest bright with dawn;  
Immortal dew made beautiful the glade,  
And blue the dim waves brake beside the lawn.

Before time came, I moved a scarlet hind,  
And your white plumage shone with starry eyes:  
Therefore in this dark land we are not blind,  
And read each other's souls without surprise.

When we are dead, my dear, and turned to mould,  
And this strange mortal rose has ceased to be,  
Again, in that wild wood of virgin gold,  
The white bird and the hind shall watch the sea.

## WILFRED ROWLAND CHILDE

### ÂGE GOTHIQUE DORÉ

**K**ING Richard in his garden walks royal,  
His mantle green being wrought with scarlet flowers,  
His hand holding a coloured book of hours,  
His coat all gold, gilden his feet withal.  
King Richard walks in his garden by Thames-side,  
Hearing the bells of high Westminster ring,  
And the sound of the chant of the monks echoing,  
Singing each in his stall to God Crucified.  
Golden the sun descends beyond Thames-water,  
Golden flash out London steeples and spires,  
Their vanes burn and turn in the day's last fires.  
About the King the flowers of the garden fade,  
And in star-light he walks on, yet lonelier,  
His heart being filled with the peace of the Mother Maid...

WILFRED ROWLAND CHILDE  
THE GOTHIC ROSE

AMID the blue smoke of gem-glassed chapels  
You shall find me, the white five-wounded Flower,  
The Rose of Sarraz. Yea, the moths have eaten,  
And fretted the gold cloths of the Duke of York,  
And lost is the scarlet cloak of the Cardinal Beaufort;  
Tapers are quenched and rods of silver broken,  
Where once King Richard dined beneath the leopards:  
But think you that any beautifulness is wasted,  
With which Mine angels have blessed the blue-eyed  
English,  
Twining into stone an obscure dream of Heaven,  
A crown of flinty spines about the Rose,  
A slim flame blessing the Coronal of Thorns?  
And York is for ever the White Rose of Mary,  
And Lancaster is dipt in the Precious Blood,  
Though the high shrine that was built by the king of  
the Romans  
Be down at Hayles, and the abbey of St Mary  
Be shattered now in three-towered Eboracum.

## RICHARD CHURCH

### THE LANTERN

**S**HE swings the lantern. Night around her  
Swings out, swings in; the roadside falls.  
Under her feet abysmal darkness sinks;  
Then from the pit, to meet her feet,  
Earth rises, sombre stones and steady soil  
Loom up, stare at the lantern, then . . .  
Sink, sink again as it swings.

On she tramps, towering above the lantern,  
All her daylight beauty lifted away,  
Underlit, and drenched with the dye,  
The smudgy gold of the drowsy beams from the lantern.  
Over the light her hip turns smooth and strong,  
Rolling the shadows to and fro on its breadth,  
To and fro in rhythm as on she swings.—  
The gaunt trees over her leap, and mope, and bow.—  
And one deep breast, like the old moon lacking light,  
Rides above, rimmed with a ghostly line;  
Then waxes full as the lantern swings before.  
Crowning this wild-lit moving life,  
The aureoled hair glows gold, a smoke-veiled fire,  
Flaming and changing, but ever her crown as she swings  
On, swings on, steady and sure, while the earth and skies  
Tumble and leap and prance and dance round the lantern.

The cows are milked; she is going home to her babe.

## OSWALD COULDREY

### MONSOON FAILURE

(The Monsoon, or Rainy Season, is due in Middle India in July.)

**T**HIS year the rainwinds blew not. Barren cloud,  
Dust, and the thunder's hollow laugh, the lean  
Snarl of the lightning, these hath Heaven bestowed.  
No dell, no bank is green:

The belly of the pool is parched: the land  
Gapes with her uncouth mouths up at the skies  
In vain: like a dead fish along the sand  
The glazing river lies.



A. S. CRIPPS

LOVE PAGAN

(A cattle price is paid for brides in Mashonaland.)

SUN-SHINE and hoe-shine!  
Delve and delve away!  
Hoe-head that I wrought her  
Busy shines to-day.  
Had I but four cattle—  
I would wed her now;  
She is sweet of favour,  
She is strong to plow.

Eye-shine and fire-shine!  
How her spoon's heft plies!  
While the black pot bubbles,  
While the bright fire sighs!  
She 'twas brewed the brown beer,  
She 'twas ground the meal!  
How can I four cattle  
Beg or buy or steal?

Twelve months I'll hire me  
For a miner's hire—  
Take the kicks and curses,  
Dare the earth-damp's ire.  
I will buy four cattle,  
Snatch my maid and run,  
She shall reap my red grain,  
She shall bear my son!

A. S. CRIPPS

AFTER THREE YEARS

O FIELDS and little street and faces kind—  
How are you changed and I!  
You that three years this day I left behind  
Beneath a sobbing sky.

We weep no more.

Time's growth and Time's decay  
Re-fashion hearts and scene:  
We cannot meet again, we are to-day  
Other than we have been.

Those were our sires, who took that long farewell  
Three years ago, but we—  
For love of them that loved each other well—  
Yearn yet across the sea.

GERALD CROW

AD SANCTUM GERALDUM PRO  
NAUTIS EJUS

**B**LESSED Gerald, watch and keep  
Those upon the hollow deep:  
Draw the towered galleons in  
To the haven each would win:  
Guard them from the pirate grim  
(God deal faithfully with him):  
Safe from fire and stormy wrack  
Bring them profitably back:  
If God will that any die,  
Blessed Gerald, hover nigh:  
Fold their hands and seal their eyes,  
Snatch them up to Paradise:  
Let not that Leviathan  
Eat up any Christian man.

OLIVER DAVIES

TIME

TIME shall consume  
Her body's splendour:  
Her grace, her bloom,  
She must surrender.

That knave-in-chief,  
That strong pursuer,  
That friend of grief,  
That arch-undoer,

He that is first,  
And last, the slayer,  
Time, the accurst,  
Time, the betrayer,

He shall consume  
Her body's splendour;  
Nor, from her doom,  
May love defend her.

OLIVER DAVIES

ON THE EMBANKMENT

*(When an aeroplane raid was expected.)*

THE river flowing,  
The traffic humming,  
Red lights going,  
White lights coming,  
And, slowly climbing,  
The moon betraying  
A Welshman rhyming  
The prayer he's praying,  
That, from strange peoples,  
God will deliver  
These towers and steeples,  
And this proud river.

VIVIENNE DAYRELL

TO THE UNKNOWN

**I**F I, Unmanifested Spirit, be  
The door through which thou passest to a greater room.  
Or tiny brook that beareth to the Sea  
Its spate of water; or small key  
Of a great casket; or the loom  
Whereon thy fabric's fashioned.

. . . . .

Breath of the Unknown, should this strange thing be,  
Seeing my youth, ask not too much of me.

VIVIENNE DAYRELL

LATE MAY

THE dusky trees, no longer dumb,  
Are asking when the Spring will come.  
The twilight wind's unscented yet  
By phlox or brier or mignonette.  
A lonely robin on the wing  
Is calling plaintively for Spring.

ERIC DICKINSON

RIVER SONG

ONE day I would be glad  
And with all quiet be  
Except your cadenced murmur  
Beside the willow-tree.

One day I would be glad  
With fields of king-cup gold:  
One day of dancing water  
Below the cuckoo-fold.

One day I would be glad  
With crowned vermilion kings  
Whose scarves are lilies blowing  
Where youth for ever sings.

One day I would be glad  
With Oxford's poplared grace:  
One day with love between us,  
And then—to lose your face.



## CAMILLA DOYLE

### THE RABBIT

ALL day this spring—the first he's known—  
He lets himself be sideways blown  
When the wind comes; he'll leap and pounce,  
And try to rush two ways at once,  
On feet that catch the very sound  
Cascades make spattering to the ground.  
    Though men with difficulty sing how soon  
        They die, how seldom living they can thrive,  
    He makes a little dancing-tune  
        By only being alive;  
No leaf that April winds blow off the tree  
Falls and leaps round again so gay as he.

## ESTHER LILIAN DUFF

### A KALENDAR

**I** MADE a Kalendar of Saints  
To name upon my rosary,  
And daily I entreat their aid for thee.  
To guard thee during sleep  
I name St Veep;  
St Prisca has thy wardrobe in her care,  
And blithe St Hugh the dressing of thy hair;  
St Madoc aids the toilette of my fair.  
When thou betimes to household tasks repair,  
St Silvester is there;  
St Chad inspects the linen and the lace;  
Each polished spoon reflects the shining face  
Of St Remigius, minister of grace,  
And o'er the meal presides St Boniface.  
To keep thy missal, tempting thee to read,  
I name St Bede;  
And later, when thy friends shall visit thee,  
Ensuring that the talk be blithe and free,  
I seek betimes the bland St Alphege;  
Whilst to thy pen, lest haply thou shouldst need it,  
Attends St Deusdedit.  
And when the little masque of day is over,  
Gentle St Damien of Villanova  
Takes charge of thee, and all that thou shalt know  
Of this hour's passing is that thou wilt grow  
Dreamily willing for the night, and so  
(Turning a bead in prayer to deft St Probin  
For thine unrobing)  
To guard thee during sleep  
I name St Veep.

T. W. EARP

TO A SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN

**B**ECAUSE you walk with consciousness of your station,  
Perfect example of a fine old school,  
The young men of the present generation  
Consider you a ridiculous old fool.

But before very long, they will be old men too,  
Mouthing the same old catchwords about love and duty,  
And it shall be said of them what they say of you,  
They will be as absurd, but they will not have your beauty.

The dignity of your time has burnt down to an ember,  
Your grand opera ways are strange to look upon,  
But you and those who are like you we shall remember  
When Madison Square and Fifth Avenue are gone.

T. W. EARP

THE GATE OF BRONZE : VII

ARTHUR, Charlemagne and Barbarossa sleep,  
Round an old table seated, buried deep  
Within a cavern underneath a hill;  
And in the peaceful world men with good will  
Plough the brown fields, and at the harvest reap  
The golden corn, and eat and drink their fill.

Arthur, Charlemagne and Barbarossa wake,  
And from the table a huge dice-box take,  
And with great knotted fingers throw a main;  
Then over the torn world are many slain,  
Beauty lies bleeding, old foundations shake,  
Until the three kings nod asleep again.

T. W. EARP

THE CALIPH WALKS

TO the small tavern what cloaked guests have come?  
The wine flows faster and more swift the jest,  
Madly the dancer answers pipe and drum,  
And now the hunched musicians play their best.

Wrapped in their dark, the old blind beggars moan,  
Nor shall night heal their woe so often told,  
When suddenly in their midst a purse is thrown,  
And a queer knowledge cries that it is gold.

Now old uxorious men feel quick alarm,  
For shadowy lutanists send a snatch of verse  
To float in at their window with strange charm;  
The casement closes to a growling curse.

Along the street light laughter ripples down,  
And through the dusk an echo of delight  
Runs like a whisper through the drowsy town;  
Haroun the Caliph is abroad to-night.

## ELEANOR FARJEON

### SONNET

**A**L A S, that ever life's sleek counterfeit,  
Convention, should usurp life's very throne,  
Setting about the bitter and the sweet  
Observances the soul disdains to own.  
It muffles up with bland expedient tongue  
The wise examination of the mind,  
Bribing the old and threatening the young  
And offering easy conduct to the blind.

A handbook of few rules for many cases,  
One answer to more sums than it can prove,  
With prizes for apt scholars in its paces,  
A veil for knowledge and a ring for love;  
And this smooth text for any questioning heart—  
Know not, and be less than, the thing thou art.

## ELEANOR FARJEON

### THE GIRL WITH THE BALL

SHE ran with her ball in her light dress floating and free,  
Tossing it, tossing it up in the evening light,  
She ran with her ball at the edge of the outgoing sea  
On sand which the dropping sun turned bright.

Over the sea hung birds more white than the skin  
Of the last few swimmers who took the waves with their  
breasts;

The birds dipped straight as her ball when a silver fin  
Glanced in the shallow crests.

She ran so swift, and suddenly stopped as swift  
To look at a shell, or splash up a pool in rain;  
Wind blew, and she in the wind began to drift  
Foam-like, and suddenly ran again.

Children who played on the shore in the last of the day  
Paused and watched in wonder her rise and fall  
Like elders watching a child: she was younger than they  
As she ran by the sea with her ball.

Her hair was loose and she had no shoes on her feet,  
And her image ran under her feet on the wet gold shore,  
She threw up her ball and she caught it, and once laughed  
sweet

As though the world had never heard laughter before.

## MOIREEN FOX

*From 'LIADAIN & CURITHIR'*

### XII

**I** WOULD bring thee, O love, jewels that mock the sun,  
Jewels that hold the purple light of the sea,  
Gold, and amber, and crystal white as the foam.

I would bring thee hounds swift as the hurrying clouds,  
Fierce as the white-fanged leaping wolves of the sea,  
Horses with manes dyed purple and bitted with gold.

I would bring thee great shields bronze-studded and  
silver-rimmed,  
Swords edged like the north and with jewels a-fire on  
their hilts,  
Crimson cloaks broidered with white findruinny.

I would bring thee songs that kings will remember for ever,  
I would bring thee a name untouched as the sun in heaven,  
And a love more deep than the unlit depths of the skies.

### XV

**I** CAN bring thee no peace:  
For through my heart the tides of the unappeasable sea  
wander unresting  
And the wind's passion beats in my blood, hungering for  
storms and hidden skies.  
O thou who lovest me, be not deceived:  
I can bring thee no peace.



*From 'LIADAIN & CURITHIR'*

XIX

**O** THORN-TREE shake thy blossoms upon the wind!  
Cover with leaves thy deep snow-laden boughs  
That swiftly may sweet crimson berries ripen.

My love has sworn when leaves and blossoms are faded  
And thy bare branches are held blood-red to the skies  
He will kiss grief and longing away from my heart.

XX

**O** HARPER play me the sea and the long white hair  
of the waves  
And the singing high-crested pride of advancing breakers  
That I may see Curithir move in the duns of kings.

Play me the strength of the wind-urged sea and the tide  
And the fall of sun-smitten waters that I may hear  
Curithir's voice  
Filled with the sorrow and passion and triumph of love.

LV

**I** THAT was wont to pass by all unmoved  
As the long ridge of the tide sweeps to the shore  
Am broken at last on the crags of a pitiless love.

I who was wont to see men pale at my glance  
Like the quivering grass am shaken beneath thine eyes,  
At thy touch my spirit is captive, my will is lost.

I would darken the sun and moon to break from thy love.  
I would shatter the world to win thee again to my side.  
O aching madness of love! Have the dead repose?  
Or wilt thou tear my heart in the close-shut grave?

H. REX FRESTON

To . . . .

**N**OT only what you are  
But all that you might be,  
Shall be my guiding star,  
Throughout eternity.

## H. REX FRESTON

To . . . .

**W**HEN the dust and toil are over,  
And the harsh broad glare of day  
Fades to evening, when the longing  
And the love have died away,

Somewhere in a moonbeam garden  
Where the light is soft and blue,  
'Neath the grass and silver shadow  
I shall lie and dream of you.

There for ever and for ever  
Undisturbèd I shall be: —  
In the everlasting silence,  
'Neath the shadow of a tree.

H. W. GARROD

THE GARDEN

SOMEWHERE west there's a Garden  
Laid out with paths of peace,  
That hath no other warden  
Save, at the Gate of Pardon,  
The Angel of Release.

You'd never dream how deep is  
The hush of souls around,  
Nor how untroubled sleep is,  
Nor how the peace they keep is  
Fenced from human sound.

There's no noise of hearts breaking,  
Only, sometimes the sigh  
Drifts in of tired souls shaking  
Life's dust off softly and taking  
On immortality.

## LOUIS GOLDING

### PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

**I** H A V E been given eyes  
Which are neither foolish nor wise,  
Seeing through joy or pain  
Beauty alone remain.

I have been given an ear  
Which catches nothing clear,  
But only along the day  
A song stealing away.

My feet and hands never could  
Do anything evil or good:  
Instead of these things,  
A swift mouth that sings.

## GERALD GOULD

### ALIEN ENEMIES

*(The German mother speaks to the English mother.)*

ON the cold frontier-line of death  
I won my man-child blood and breath :  
At a great price, in gulfs of night,  
Purchased the morning for his sight,  
And in a silence big with fear  
Fore-wrought the musics he should hear.

And you?—ah, who should know but I  
The wings of death that beat so nigh,  
The deathly dark, the deathly dews,  
The soul that will not yet refuse,  
And all you risked, and all you paid,  
When out of you your son was made?

Your son and mine in love were bred,  
Your son and mine in hate are dead,  
Yet never hated, never knew  
The sense of what they had to do,  
But perished, brother slain by brother,  
Who might as well have loved each other.

The happy hands, too good to put  
To the red business of the brute;  
The candid eyes that death's release  
Found peopled with the dreams of peace;  
The hope beneath my heart that grew—  
Ah, who should know them if not you?

## ALIEN ENEMIES

Dear mother of a murdered son,  
Ours is the end by us begun!  
Ours is the strength the drums called up,  
And ours it is to drink the cup  
Of childless days, of childless years,  
Salt with the taste of blood and tears.

Dear murdered mother!—still to die  
The women's regiments go by:  
No music of the march for them,  
And for their souls no requiem,  
When, 'mid the screaming of the guns,  
The mothers perish in their sons.

And we are foes, or so they tell me—  
But in the wonder that befell me,  
When, solitary soldier, I  
Fought for the life so soon to die—  
When out of night I brought, I won,  
My morning-star, my little son—  
When at the utter risk and cost  
I gained the solace I have lost—  
When underneath my opening eyes  
Lay that which now all altered lies—  
When to my warm and passionate breast  
I held the limbs now cold in rest—  
I knew one peace that shall not end,  
And every mother for my friend.

## GERALD GOULD

### SONG

SHE whom I love will sit apart,  
And they whom love makes wise  
May know the beauty in her heart  
By the beauty in her eyes.

Thoughts that in quietness confute  
The noisy world are hers,  
Like music in a listening lute  
, Whose strings no finger stirs.

And in her eyes the shadows move,  
Not glad nor sad, but strange  
With those unchanging dreams that prove  
The littleness of change.



## DESMOND HARMSWORTH

### THE DIVER

THROUGH the still sunlight, poising, limb to limb  
He has curved, dropped in full-flaming arc;  
Nor yet turns, though his loud blood frightens him,  
But sinks into the further, deeper dark.  
Lo, he is shrouded round by a green night  
Full of a sudden silence; round his face  
He feels blind touch, soft contact; in his sight,  
Fugitive bubbles in an empty space.

I have so dived out of the glare of day,  
And swum down darkly, seeking that rich store  
Of gemlike, scarce intelligible things,  
Things lightly guessed at, caught, then snatched away;  
Groped at surmise and half-imaginings;  
Sounded for truth; nor ever gained the floor.

## ROGER HEATH

### THE SOUL

O H if the soul is Matter's child,  
Though it disdained to deem  
Matter its mother, and beguiled  
Its journey with a dream,  
And being but a thing of earth  
As its companions are,  
Imagined for itself a birth  
Unknown, but nobler far:

Then Death shall take the rebel soul,  
The runaway of Fate;  
The grains that grew into a whole  
Once more shall separate.

Among the myriad seeds of things  
Dispersed they shall lie,  
Blown forth beneath the rushing wings  
That kill and vivify;

And by the ever-winnowing storm  
Hither and thither rolled,  
Shall never meet again to form  
The same soul as of old.

But if the soul is doomed to die,  
The body being dead,  
In no earth chamber shall it lie  
With short grass overhead.

## THE SOUL

For in a little planet born  
And narrow bounds of time,  
It freed itself with noble scorn  
And energy sublime.  
Despising space and all the bars  
That hemmed the body in,  
It communed with the outer stars  
And learnt their origin.  
The javelins of thought and sense  
Forward and back it hurled:  
It prophesied of ages hence  
And knew the elder world.  
With more than earthly valour dowered  
It flew on fearless wings;  
With knowledge and belief it scoured  
The wilderness of things.  
And so the dead soul shall not lie  
In earthly tomb confined:  
It shall be buried in the sky,  
Magnificently shrined.  
With monuments and carven stones  
We emulate in vain  
The burial of men whose bones  
Are sunk beneath the main.  
Under no marble slabs they sleep,  
In little earthen caves,  
But in the caverns of the deep  
Beneath a waste of waves.

## THE SOUL

Around them like the roots of trees  
The earth's foundations spread,  
Tall islands are the cypresses  
That cluster overhead.

But far more wonderful than this  
The dead soul's tomb shall be:  
The heaven's infinite abyss  
Is deeper than the sea.

And for the soul that shall have bowed  
Its head to death's assault,  
The galaxy shall be a shroud  
The universe a vault.

Comets that scour the heavenly deep  
And falling stars that pass,  
Across its sepulchre shall creep  
Like glow-worms in the grass.

And so if Fate has willed it thus  
And if the soul is doomed,  
It shall not lie inglorious  
But royally entombed.

But if it comes of other race  
And not of earthly kin,  
Then Fate and Death shall ne'er efface  
Its heavenly origin.

But bursting all the bonds that bind  
The branded thralls of Earth,  
It shall go out alive to find  
The country of its birth.

## RICHARD HUGHES

### GRATITUDE

**E**TERNAL gratitude—a long, thin word:  
When meant, oftenest left unheard:  
When light on the tongue, light in the purse too:  
Of curious metallurgy: when coined true  
It glitters not, is neither large nor small:  
More worth than rubies—less, times, than a ball.  
Not gift, nor willed: yet through its wide range  
Buys what it buys exact, and leaves no change.

Old Gurney had it, won on a hot day  
With ale, from glib-voiced Gypsy by the way.  
He held it lightly: for 'twas a rum start  
To find a hedgeling who had still a heart:  
So put it down for twist of a beggar's tongue. . .  
*He* had not felt the heat: how the dust stung  
A face June-roasted: *he* saw not the look  
Aslant the gift-mug; how the hand shook. . .  
Yet the words rang his head, and he grew merry  
And whistled from the Boar to Wrye-brook ferry,  
And chaffed with Ferryman when the hawser creakt  
Or slipping bilge showed where the planks leakt:  
Lent hand himself, till doubly hard the barge  
Butted its nose in mud of the farther marge.  
When Gurney leapt to shore, he found—dismay!  
He had no tuppence—(Tuppence was to pay  
To sulky Ferryman)—'Naught have I,' says he,

## GRATITUDE

'Naught, but the gratitude of Tammás Lee  
Given one hour.'—Sulky Charon grinned:  
'Done,' said he. 'Done: I take—all of it, mind.'  
'Done,' cries Jan Gurney. Down the road he went,  
But by the ford left all his merriment.

This is the tale of midday chaffering:  
How Charon took, and Gurney lost the thing:  
How Ferryman gave it for his youngest daughter  
To a tall lad who saved her out of water—  
(Being old and mean, had none of his own to give,  
So passed on 'Tammás', glad to see her live):  
And how young Farmer paid his quarter's rent  
With that one coin, when all else was spent,  
And how Squire kept it for some goldless debt. . .  
For aught I know, it wanders current yet.

Yet Tammás was no angel in disguise:  
He stole Squire's chickens—often: he told lies,  
Robbed Charon's garden, burnt young Farmer's ricks  
And played the village many lowsy tricks.

No children sniffled, and no dog cried  
When, full of oaths and smells, he died.

ALDOUS HUXLEY  
MOLE

**T**UNNELLED in solid blackness creeps  
The old mole-soul, and wakes or sleeps,  
He knows not which, but tunnels on  
Through ages of oblivion;  
Until at last the long constraint  
Of each-hand wall is lost, and faint  
Comes daylight creeping from afar,  
And mole-work grows crepuscular.  
Tunnel meets air and bursts; mole sees  
Men hugely walking . . . or are they trees?  
And far horizons smoking blue,  
And chasing clouds for ever new;  
Green hills, like lighted lamps aglow  
Or quenching 'neath the cloud-shadow;  
Quenching and blazing turn by turn,  
Spring's great green signals fitfully burn.  
Mole travels on, but finds the steering  
A harder task of pioneering  
Than when he thridded through the strait  
Blind catacombs that ancient fate  
Had carved for him. Stupid and dumb  
And blind and touchless he had come  
A way without a turn; but here,  
Under the sky, the passenger  
Chooses his own best way; and mole  
Distracted wanders, yet his hole  
Regrets not much wherein he crept,  
But runs, a joyous nympholept,  
This way and that, by all made mad—  
River nymph and oread,

## M O L E

Ocean's daughters and Lorelei,  
Combing the silken mystery,  
The glaucous gold of her rivery tresses—  
Each haunts the traveller, each possesses  
The drunken wavering soul awhile;  
Then with a phantom's cock-crow smile  
Mocks craving with sheer vanishment.

Mole-eyes grow hawk's: knowledge is sent  
In grudging dribblets that pay high  
Unconscionable usury  
To unrelenting life. Mole learns  
To travel more secure; the turns  
Of his long way less puzzling seem,  
And all those magic forms that gleam  
In airy invitation cheat  
Less often than they did of old.

The earth slopes upward, fold by fold  
Of quiet hills that meet the gold  
Serenity of western skies.  
Over the world's edge with clear eyes  
Our mole transcendent sees his way  
Tunnelled in light: he must obey  
Necessity again and thrice  
Close catacombs as erst he did,  
Fate's tunnellings, himself must bore  
Through the sunset's inmost core.  
The guiding walls to each hand shine  
Luminous and crystalline;  
And mole shall tunnel on and on,  
Till night let fall oblivion.



ALDOUS HUXLEY

A LITTLE MEMORY

WHITE in the moonlight,  
Wet with dew,  
We have known the languor  
Of being two.

We have been weary  
As children are,  
When over them, radiant,  
A stooping star,  
Bends their Good-Night,  
Kissed and smiled:—  
Each was mother,  
Each was child.

Child, from your forehead  
I kissed the hair,  
Gently, ah, gently:  
And you were

Mistress and mother  
When on your breast  
I lay so safely  
And could rest.

C. H. B. KITCHIN

CHINESE NIGHT

**P**ALE as the moonlight sits the Mandarin  
Outside the blue pagoda, where the breeze  
Plays with the little shrubs, and lamps within  
Draw floating shadows from the twisted trees.

No falling star presageful through the night  
Diving white-streaked to caves beneath the sea  
Where lies the end of heavenly delight,  
No peal of bells, may touch his reverie.

Apart, he dreams of thought celestial  
That courses like a river through his mind,  
Robed delicate with silk imperial  
That women worked until their eyes were blind.

A sacrifice no music may console,  
He sits alone, and wiles the night away  
In contemplation of a painted scroll,—  
Pale as the moonlight, waiting for the day.

MARGARET RIVERS LARMINIE

GENESIS

‘**B**E A U T Y,’ I said, ‘whose child are you—  
Sprung from what happy seed?’  
Smiling, sad-eyed, she answered me:  
‘Pain, and a mighty need.’

‘Beauty,’ I said, ‘what fruit is yours?  
What children do you breed?’  
Smiling, sad-eyed, she answered me:  
‘Pain, and a mighty need.’

## VERA LARMINIE

### THE SHADOW

SHE loitered on the high road, she hastened in the lane,  
At every turn before her the shadow turned again.

She lingered in the valley, she climbed across the hill,  
But all the way beside her the shadow flitted still.

She came into the homestead, she entered by the door,  
But close against the lintel the shadow went before.

She stayed beside the hearthstone, she took the wonted  
place,  
But from the faces round her the shadow hid her face.

She lay beneath the yew trees, the earth upon her breast,  
But on the grass above her the shadow lay at rest.

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN

GIGANTIC DOCTOR

**G**IGANTIC Doctor, stalking visibly  
Out of the freezing north, cadaver calm,  
Energic, Death, whose stature takes earth, sky  
And sea with resolution, steady balm  
And satisfying, anæsthetic end  
Of struggle, white, inexorable friend,  
Mirror which flatters not, essential need  
Which, expurgating, blesses, architect  
Of brains and systems into one square creed  
Osseous, subterranean, dissect  
My frenzied grief, or petrify the skull  
With one blow of thy kindly sceptre dull.

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN

THE FINGER

(To R.T.)

HOW curiously this triple whole  
Of skin and blood and bone  
Consenteth to the mind's control  
And to the mind's alone.

'Tis for diurnal uses mine,  
To move howe'er I please,  
Or mingle with its brothers nine  
Enclasped about my knees.

Yet often when the mind's afar,  
By vagrant thought bestirred,  
It gaily shifts and beats the bar  
To songs and sounds unheard.

Mute eloquence! 'Tis plain to see  
As face in looking-glass  
That more than one is lord of me  
When this is brought to pass.

What else but mind and mind alone  
Should rule the triple whole,  
But how if skin and blood and bone  
Themselves enshroud a soul?

SUSAN MILES  
THE PARSON'S WIFE: A RE-ACTION

*'How is it I dislike the things I dislike so much more  
than I like the things I like?'*—Robert Elsmere.

I DO not want to discuss the price of flannelette with  
the doctor's wife.

I do not care whether flannelette costs fivepence three  
farthings

Or fivepence halfpenny.

I do not want to decide how many loaves of bread for the  
school treat

Shall be white

And how many shall be *Standard*.

I do not know whether Palmer's fruit cake is better than  
Smith's

Or whether Smith's is better than Palmer's.

I do not want to 'take a tray' at the Mothers' tea.

I do not want to decorate the church with heavy wreaths  
of ivy

And of holly.

The holly pricks my fingers,

And the spiteful words of the decorators prick my heart.

I do not remember whether the holly had many berries  
last year

Or few berries.

I do not remember whether Mrs Paul or Mrs Knox

'Did' the font three years ago.

I have forgotten to buy cap-wire,

And I have lost the dimensions of the pulpit.

## THE PARSON'S WIFE

I do not want to ask the schoolmaster's wife to tea,  
Or the churchwarden's wife to dinner.  
I do not want to organize progressive games  
To amuse yelling choir-boys.  
I have no wish to entertain the choir-men.  
I shall tell them that it has been a fine day, though cold.  
They will tell me that there may be a frost.  
I shall wonder whether we shall have skating this year.  
They will say that they too wonder, and they will add  
That there was no skating last year.  
I do not want to 'get up' a play with the girls' club.  
The girls cannot act.  
Nor have they any manners.  
Their voices have no inflections and they giggle most  
vilely.  
I have no wish to attend a missionary meeting in the  
schoolroom.  
The boys at the back of the room  
Will plunge  
And will shuffle with their feet.  
The lantern will inevitably go wrong.  
It will smell.  
I do not want to audit the accounts of the Dunch Temper-  
ance Society  
Nor of the Boot Club.  
I do not want to prepare the minutes  
Of the Dunch Debating Society.  
I do not want to reduce to order  
Resolutions that have neither form nor comeliness  
Nor charity.



## THE PARSON'S WIFE

I do not know how to represent in black and white  
The attempts of Mr Hudson  
To worm his way on to the Committee,  
Nor the determination of Mr Reynolds  
To keep him off.  
It is impossible to give the essence of the controversy  
Without allusion to Mrs Reynolds,  
Yet Mrs Reynolds contributed nothing visible to the  
discussion  
Save glares,  
And glares cannot be committed to the pages  
Of a minute book.  
I do not want to count the choir boys' surplices before  
sending them to the wash.  
One of them has squashed a bullseye on his;  
And another has let his nose bleed  
On his.  
I do not want to sit with the Johnson children at Matins.  
They will spit upon their fingers  
And write their names in the floor dust.  
They will count in maddening whispers up to fifty,  
And again up to fifty.  
They will pull their stockings down  
And then up.  
They will cause their Gospel Stamps to adhere to their  
persons,  
Probably to their noses.  
I do not want to distribute plum-puddings  
To curtseying old women.  
If their digestions are such as they describe them to me

## THE PARSON'S WIFE

With much disgusting detail,  
They have no business to eat  
Plum-puddings.  
I do not want to pass the public-houses  
Where the men are yelling filth,  
Nor the street corner where the young men  
Spit.  
I do not want to have tea with the Joneses.  
They will chatter  
And they will expect me to chatter  
About troubles that tear my heart.  
I do not want to visit the village idiots.  
Maggie Miller will sit with her leg round her neck,  
She will gibber at me.  
Sarah Morgan will tell me ten times over  
That her neighbours have put green poison  
In her gruel.  
She will pour the soup I take her  
Down the drain  
For fear of green poison.  
She and her father will talk and talk and talk  
Simultaneously and monotonously.  
Each will become resentful  
If I attend to the other.  
I do not want to visit old lady Barton.  
She will enquire of me concerning the health and where-  
abouts of her parents,  
And her grandchildren will scream in her ear the inform-  
ation  
That they are in the Churchyard

## THE PARSON'S WIFE

And have been these twenty year.  
And then old lady Barton will weep until she has forgotten,  
And then will begin to enquire again  
Concerning the health and whereabouts  
Of her parents.  
I do not want to visit Mrs Hopps  
And her ninth new baby;  
As likely as not there will be a flea on the bed  
Or a piece of cold potato.  
I do not want to meet Mrs Fletcher.  
She will follow me with her tongue extended that I may  
    see  
How it is furred.  
She will beg me to touch her side  
That I may feel her tumour  
Tick like a clock.  
I do not want to visit the butcher's wife.  
She is aggrieved  
Because I asked her to tea with her next-door neighbour,  
Who is nobody;  
Whereas she, the butcher's wife,  
Had an uncle, to whose memory  
A tablet was erected  
In the chancel of his parish church.  
I do not want to visit Mrs Jolly.  
She is aggrieved  
Because her sister  
Received her Parish Chronicle  
The day before she (Mrs Jolly) received *her* Parish  
    Chronicle.

## THE PARSON'S WIFE

I do not want ever to see a Parish Chronicle again.  
I do not want to visit the churchwarden's wife.  
She will use her saw-like voice on me and will deplore the  
fact  
That I 'don't visit.'  
She will tell me that I should make 'quite a nice little  
parson's wife,'  
If only I would give up all that silly nonsense about the  
Vote  
And turn my thoughts to duties  
That lie near home.  
I do not want to visit Mrs Green;  
She will hint at hateful things  
Concerning Mrs Brown.  
I do not want to visit Mrs Brown;  
She will hint at vile secrets  
Concerning Mrs Green.  
A village is not a peaceful place  
Or a pleasant place.  
It is not a little Heaven upon earth,  
But entirely otherwise.

F. S<sub>T</sub> V. MORRIS

PROCRASTINATION

A S W E E T wind passed in the forest  
And moaned in the shadows above,  
And he heard it sigh through the branches,  
And it seemed as the voice of Love.

And he went his way for a season,  
And came when he deemed it good:  
But the trees were felled—and the voices  
Had passed from the whispering Wood.

J. S. MUIRHEAD

EPIGRAM

EVERY night the moon doth lead  
The pale sea-waters in to feed;  
Every day the barrèd shore,  
Brims with the wrack of ocean's store;  
Yet may the sands no increase see,  
And the dull waves still hungered be,  
So tho' the worlds my garners fill,  
I gather and am empty still.

V. de S. PINTO

ART

**F**A T E from an unimaginable throne  
Scatters a million roses on the world.  
They fall like shooting stars across the sky  
Glittering. Under a dark clump of trees  
Man, a gaunt creature, squats upon the ground  
Apelike and grins to see those brilliant flowers  
Raining through the dark foliage; he tries  
Sometimes to clutch at them but in his hands  
They melt like snow. Then in despair he turns  
Back to his wigwam, stirs the embers, pats  
His blear-eyed dog and smokes a pipe and soon  
Wrapped in a blanket, drowns off to sleep.  
But all his dreams are full of flying flowers.

FRANK PREWETT

THE winds caress the trees,  
Woman to man is led,  
And I too have my love,  
Though she comes not to bed.

Beyond the heat of flesh,  
Which has its place and day,  
We hold our keen delights  
In spirit, earth away.

Mount me on high, O soul,  
Expand me my desires,  
So shall I clasp in love  
Even the heavenly fires!



## EDGELL RICKWORD

### INTIMACY

SINCE I have seen you do those intimate things  
That other men but dream of; lull asleep  
The sinister dark forest of your hair,  
And tie the bows that stir on your calm breast  
Faintly as leaves that shudder in their sleep.  
Since I have seen your stocking swallow up,  
A swift black wind, the pale flame of your foot,  
And deemed your slender limbs so meshed in silk  
Sweet mermaid sisters drowned in their dark hair;  
I have not troubled overmuch with food,  
And wine has seemed like water from a well;  
Pavements are built of fire, grass of thin flames.  
All other girls grow dull as painted flowers  
Or flutter harmlessly like coloured flies  
Whose wings are tangled in the net of leaves  
Spread by frail trees that grow behind the eyes.

## MORLEY ROBERTS

### DESPAIR

MY little beauty fades away,  
None but myself bids it to stay.

My hair grows thin: it's not so long:  
Nothing but kisses could keep it strong.

My little breasts they wither so:  
For only love could make them grow.

The pleasant curves about my knee  
Are dead of thirst and jealousy.

I see my cheeks, my throat and chin  
Die for the love that some call sin.

My sister's beauty, who has it not,  
Is still as great in one man's thought.

But no man's thought my body sees,  
And no man's lips have kissed my knees.

I have been naught: I've nothing done:  
I've not been lost and not been won.

## DOROTHY L. SAYERS

### CAROL

THE Ox said to the Ass, said he, all on a Christmas night:  
'Do you hear the pipe of the shepherds a-whistling over the hill?  
That is the angels' music they play for their delight,  
"Glory to God in the highest and peace upon earth, goodwill" ...  
Nowell, nowell, my masters, God lieth low in stall,  
And the poor, labouring Ox was here before you all.'

The Ass said to the Ox, said he, all on a Christmas day:  
'Do you hear the golden bridles come clinking out of the east?  
Those are the three wise Mages that ride from far away  
To Bethlehem in Jewry to have their lore increased ...  
Nowell, nowell, my masters, God lieth low in stall,  
And the poor, foolish Ass was here before you all.'

## FREDEGOND SHOVE

### SÓNG

**S**PRING lights her candles everywhere,  
But death still hangs upon the air:  
The celandine through dusk is lit,  
The redbreasts from the holly flit,  
At night the violets spring to birth  
Out of the mute, encrusted earth.

The wind has cast his winding sheet  
(Which is the sky) and he goes fleet  
Over the country in the rain,  
Singing how all the world is vain  
And how, of all things vainest, he  
Journeys above both land and sea.

## EDITH SITWELL

### SERENADE

**T**HE tremulous gold of stars within your hair  
Are yellow bees flown from the hive of night,  
Finding the blossom of your eyes more fair  
Than all the pale flowers folded from the light.  
Then, Sweet, awake, and ope your dreaming eyes<sup>s</sup>  
Ere those bright bees have flown and darkness dies.

EDITH SITWELL

THE KING OF CHINA'S DAUGHTER

THE King of China's daughter,  
She never would love me  
Though I hung my cap and bells upon  
Her nutmeg tree.  
For oranges and lemons,  
The stars in bright blue air,  
(I stole them long ago, my dear)  
Were dangling there.  
The Moon did give me silver pence,  
The Sun did give me gold,  
And both together softly blew  
And made my porridge cold;  
But the King of China's daughter  
Pretended not to see  
When I hung my cap and bells upon  
Her nutmeg tree.

OSBERT SITWELL

‘THEREFORE IS THE NAME OF IT  
CALLED BABEL’

AND still we stood and stared far down  
Into that ember-glowing town,  
Which every shaft and shock of fate  
Had shorn unto its base. Too late  
Came carelessly Serenity.

Now torn and broken houses gaze  
On to the rat-infested maze  
That once sent up rose-silver haze  
To mingle through eternity.

The outlines, once so strongly wrought,  
Of city walls, are now a thought  
Or jest unto the dead who fought . . .  
Foundation for futurity.

The shimmering sands where once there played  
Children with painted pail and spade  
Are drearily desolate,—afraid  
To meet Night’s dark humanity,

Whose silver cool remakes the dead,  
And lays no blame on any head  
For all the havoc, fire and lead,  
That fell upon us suddenly,

## BABEL

When all we came to know as good  
Gave way to Evil's fiery flood,  
And monstrous myths of iron and blood  
Seem to obscure God's clarity.

Deep sunk in sin, this tragic star  
Sinks deeper still, and wages war  
Against itself; strewn all the seas  
With victims of a world disease.  
—And we are left to drink the lees  
Of Babel's direful prophecy.



SACHEVERELL SITWELL

‘PSITTACHUS EOIS IMITATRIX  
ALES AB INDIS.’—*Ovid.*

THE parrot’s voice snaps out—  
No good to contradict—  
What he says he’ll say again:  
Dry facts, like biscuits,—

His voice and vivid colours  
Of his breast and wings  
Are immemoriably old;  
Old dowagers dressed in crimpèd satin  
Boxed in their rooms  
Like specimens beneath a glass  
Inviolatè—and never changing,  
Their memory of emotions dead;  
The ardour of their summers  
Sprayed like camphor  
On their silken parasols  
Intissued in a cupboard.

Reflective, but with never a new thought  
The parrot sways upon his ivory perch—  
Then gravely turns a somersault  
Through rings nailed in the roof—  
Much as the sun performs his antics  
As he climbs the aerial bridge  
We only see  
Through crystal prisms in a falling rain.

SACHEVERELL SITWELL

THE NIGHTINGALE

THE white nightingale is hidden in the branches  
And heavy leafage of the clouds.  
She pours down her song—  
Cascades threaded like pearls,  
And the winds, her many-noted flutes  
Flood forth their harmony.—  
But the Earth turns away  
Swinging in its air and water-rocked cradle.

## BENVENUTA SOLOMON

### THE TOWER UNBUILT

SWEET were it to believe you too had felt  
This ache that so torments me; that the same  
Anguish and ecstasy were yours; my name  
As music in your ears; that you had knelt  
With hidden tearless eyes that could not melt,  
And all your spirit drawn upward like a flame  
In passion, prayer, and longing clean of shame:  
That Love with you as me had terribly dealt.—  
    This is not love that could desire your hurt;  
    Love nothing wills but good, though banished  
    For evermore from hope and glad surmise.  
    Suffering and sorrow may the gods avert  
    From your dear head, beloved, from your dear head!  
    I give them thanks for your untroubled eyes.

## BENVENUTA SOLOMON

### HUMAN SACRIFICE

**L**O, ye who tread for Beauty's sake  
Her starry ways and high,  
For any loveliness ye make  
A living thing must die.

Yield up your tribute of the slain.  
Then know the doom fulfilled:  
Music that, heals the spirit's pain  
From blood has been distilled.

Some soul accepts the victim's part  
Ere soul is breathed in stone;  
And every poet breaks a heart,  
Another's—or his own.

To feed the vision's sacred fire  
Some dream in ashes lies:  
The gods for all their gifts require  
A human sacrifice.

## ANTHONY STEEL

### ODYSSEY IX

**T**H E R E is a strand beloved beyond all telling  
By all whose steps have marked the sounding shore,  
Where the long cool azure of the waters, swelling  
And waning, ripples low for evermore.  
Sweeping high heavenward the white cliffs score,  
Clear-cut and insolent, the silent sky,  
Flecked with the gleam of wings that wheel and soar  
Where the waste places of the heavens lie.

All we, whose hearts were sick, have lost our pain there,  
Finding therein no shameful paths to roam;  
We have renewed our jaded loves again there  
And watched the sunlight dancing on the foam;  
Cyclops and no man, naught to sting and stain there  
But the dark hulls of Odysseus, seeking home.

## DOROTHEA STILL

### DISCONTENT

SHRINKING of a virgin cold  
From stranger lust in lover bold;  
Terror of a fierce desire  
Whose heat called up no sister fire:  
Spared this terror, man of mine,  
What other sacrifice was thine?

Horror of a woman's dread  
Lest the babe she bears be dead;  
Lest in anguish she must bide  
With no comfort warm beside:  
Spared this horror, man of mine,  
In its place, what ill was thine?

Spared the web of baby needs  
Spun about the breast that feeds,  
Weaved around reluctant heart  
That in passion finds no part;  
Spared these shackles, man of mine,  
In their place what stay is thine?

L. A. G. STRONG

LOWERY COT

(*For Robert Graves*)

**T**HIS is the house where Jesse White  
Run staring in one misty night,  
And said he seed the Holy Ghost  
Out to Lowery finger-post.

Said It rised up like a cloud  
Muttering to Itself out leud,  
And stood tremendous on the hill °  
While all the breathing world was still.

They put en shivering to bed,  
And in three days the man was dead.  
Gert solemn visions such as they  
Be overstrong for mortal clay.

L. A. G. STRONG

ZEKE

**G**NARLY and bent and deaf 's a pos'  
Pore ole Ezekiel Purvis  
Goeth crippin' slowly up the 'ill  
To the Commoonion Survis.

And tappy tappy up the haisle  
Goeth stick and brassy ferule:  
And Passen 'ath to stoopy down  
And 'olley in ees yerole.



F. PEARCE STURM

WHITE CRANES

THE white cranes wandering by,  
Breaking the twilight's rest  
With a sorrowful cry,  
Disappear in the West,  
Spots on the desert sky.

Stars flowering one by one  
Out of heaven's blue deep,  
Bring no oblivion,  
Bring no quiet sleep,  
To me whom they shine upon.

How can the rent heart know  
Peace, when cold stars above,  
And burning sands below,  
Are perishing of the slow  
Hurt of rejected love?

F. PEARCE STURM

STILL-HEART

**D**READ are the death-pale Kings  
Who bend to the oar,  
Dread is the voice that sings  
On the starless shore,  
Lamentations and woes:  
Cold on the wave  
Beautiful Still-Heart goes  
To the rock-hewn grave.  
The limbs are bound, and the breasts  
That I kissed are cold;  
Beautiful Still-Heart rests  
With the queens of old.

F. PEARCE STURM  
AN OFFERING AT THE TOMB

MYRRHA

HERE surely we have found our long-sought  
peace. . .

HERMAS

Lovely indeed the dew-cooled garden-dusk,  
Where the dark rose, an Ethiopian queen  
Swathed in her scarlet, dreams the night away  
By fretted trellises of time-worn stone.

MYRRHA

A fallen petal in the moss-hung basin,  
Lone as a frail boat on a desperate gulph,  
Floats among isles of outspread water lilies,  
As you and I once sailed the Grecian sea  
By starlight, in our youth, a world away.  
And, Hermas, see, a fish with luminous eyes  
Out of the water's emerald shade floats up  
And disappointed sulky turns away  
With jewels bubbling round his silver tail:  
Such beauty saddens peace with nameless thoughts.

HERMAS

I see the square sail blotting out the stars,  
And hear the creak of cordage, and the songs  
Of those bronze-throated sailors from the isles,  
And smell the flowering citron as we passed  
Shady Zacynthos, when a land-breeze blew.  
And I remember how, a phantom dawn  
When sea and sky were one dim lake of gold,  
The scarlet crane that flew upon the mast

## AN OFFERING

Danced, flapped and screamed with a foreboding cry  
Until an arrow brought him fluttering down,  
And how you wept to see the handsome plumes  
Stiffen in death and the fierce eye grow dim.

### MYRRHA

Such memories shared with one we love are life.  
And life is joy, and what is joy but peace,  
A slow procession from the crowded past  
Of old events time-purged of all their dross?

### HERMAS

Myrrha, dear comrade of the pilgrimage  
Trodden since time began, and trodden yet,  
Do not the endless, ever endless murmurings  
Of singing water, the cold fountain voices,  
The spectral roses and the buried garden,  
All this that is illusion and decay,  
And all the glittering pomps that memory  
Happily feeds on and yet half distrusts  
*For their unnatural beauty, do not these*  
Warn hearts like ours that peace is not their home?

### MYRRHA

No, peace is all. Look, Hermas, look, the Moon  
The setting moon, dark Hathor's floating shrine,  
Seen through yon row of broken colonnades  
Pours her wan fire upon the sleeping sea.  
Henceforth let life be such a tideless flood,  
Lit by such a fire.

O Hermas, share we here  
Some quiet years of undelirious joy,  
For wandering discontent offends the gods.

## AN OFFERING

HERMAS

Indeed, indeed; but is there any cure?  
Has man one moment of unmixed content  
Till the abhorred embalmer gilds the face  
And binds the shrunk arms to the parchment chest  
With resined bandages, and hides away  
For ever in a Babylonian night  
The husk he shall become?

MYRRHA

And then? Tell on.

HERMAS

Then, then at last, the spirit like a hawk  
Freed from the sad necessity of life,  
A sleek hawk, tameless, taloned, amber-eyed,  
Poised for a moment on his broken cage  
Of fallen bones, lifts wings and with a cry,  
As when a silver harp-string tightened snaps,  
Climbs to his home through leagues of diamond sky,  
Icy-cold or molten hot,  
But that wild spirit as he springs,  
Wondering to diviner things,  
He knoweth not  
Light, darkness, cold or heat,  
Only the beat, beat, beat,  
Of his great wings!

MYRRHA

When we long dead shall gaze in wonder back  
Upon this painted dream, shall we remember  
The little things that make the dream so sweet?

## AN OFFERING

Shall I know why the moon that tames the tide  
Of the great sea, should stoop from heaven to lift  
Drops from my heart to shed them in these tears?  
Or why the snow-white thorn tree burning there  
In lamp-like beauty, scenting all the dark,  
Now fills with such unbearable delight  
This heart that then will long have ceased to beat?

HERMAS

We may know all or nothing. Those who know,  
Or say they know, and are accounted wise  
Hold that the dead are so beyond the reach  
Of mortal thought that man can only say  
The dead are dead and death is nothingness;  
But in that nothingness, and there alone,  
True being is, and there we find our peace.  
Hush, some one comes!

MYRRHA

Where? From the sycamore wood?

HERMAS

No, by the path  
Between the cypress and white-flowering thorn;  
The moon now carves a shape against the pale  
Background of light. It should, if shaven head,  
High shoulders and thin flanks  
Tell what I think they tell, be one of those  
Priests of the old religion who still dream  
By fallen tomb and broken monument  
Of things best left forgotten.

## AN OFFERING

MYRRHA

Let us wait  
Near the old grave among the myrtle bushes,  
Whose worn inscription puzzles even you,  
Wise as you are. The Priest is nearer now.  
I am afraid . . . if it should prove a ghost . . .

HERMAS

It is a priest, and timid as a hare,  
Mark how he trembles and would surely run,  
Did not his leaden foot-sole cling to earth  
As in an evil dream: But have no fear. . .

THE PRIEST

You holy Sisters  
Protect your servant  
From all evil:  
From the long dead  
And from the newly dead,  
Goddesses, shield him.

MYRRHA

He calls on Isis and her darker sister  
I am half dead with terror . . . hold me closer,  
An evil thought has crept into my blood  
And I am in the shadow of cold wings,  
The dark and stagnant twilight of the grave  
Clings to my skin. O would that I might swoon . . .

HERMAS

Be still . . .

## AN OFFERING

MYRRHA

I cannot. That is not a priest.  
It is the Ka of some one ages dead  
And buried in this grave, who now returns;  
Or some unshackled fiend with teeth of stone  
Out of the Lake of Fire to eat my soul.

HERMAS

No, no, dear love. It is a pilgrim priest,  
One of those wanderers from nome to nome,  
Who sacrifice at altars else deserted  
And lay kind offerings on neglected tombs:  
I see his iron-shod stave and wicker basket.

MYRRHA

O let it not contain a strangled babel  
Sweet Mother Hathor, why does starry night  
Loose such a terror on my peaceful dream?  
And you, O Hermas, do you tremble also?

HERMAS

I dare no more deny that there is that  
About this priest that makes his presence feared:  
Daemon or mortal, do not dream I fear him.  
This body wavers like wind-ruffled water  
But my strong will is granite to protect you.

MYRRHA

I knew it. I am lost. It is a ghost.  
Your terror doubles mine and I shall die.



## AN OFFERING

PRIEST (*singing to himself*)

Too faint even to bear  
The burden of the thought  
That once they lived and kissed,  
They tread the thin night air  
Who are but memories caught  
In bodies woven of mist.  
And I, grown old with thought  
Before my hair is grey,  
Because the dream I brought  
Into the light of day  
Has withered, has withered away. . .

Alas, I cannot sing any but sad songs. There is a cold  
breath in the back of my neck. It is a strange hour of  
the night to be here. Hold me, O heart of Ra! What  
did the mariners at Naucratis sing?

Protect us, O Lord,  
When the moon sets  
And the tide turns  
And the dead are abroad . . .

No, no, that is an embalmer's song. I will make my  
offering and say my prayer, and be gone.

HERMAS (*after a pause*)

He has approached the tomb. He now kneels down  
And opens his round basket. He draws forth  
Small bowls of red baked clay. In one neat row  
He lays them on the sepulchre. He fills  
Some with small wheaten cakes, in some pours wine,  
An offering to the dead.

## AN OFFERING

MYRRHA

Need I not fear?

HERMAS

'Tis but a priest who thus fulfils some vow  
To visit long-deserted burial-grounds  
And make sepulchral offerings to the dead  
Who have no friends to serve their shadowy needs.  
Let us not greet him till his prayers be done.

PRIEST (*before the tomb*)

Hermas and Myrrha, may your shades devour  
The spiritual substance of the offerings  
I lay upon your tomb: the little loaves  
Of consecrated bread, the ancient wine  
That has been used in temple services  
Time out of mind. And Hermas, if you meet  
Among the shades who are your comrades now  
A shade more beautiful than your own Myrrha  
That is my lost Aola; bid her wait;  
Tell her that Manetho has kept his word,  
Given at Susa underneath the palms.  
Hermas and Myrrha, dead five centuries,  
If in your wanderings you meet a god  
Offer a prayer for Manetho the priest  
Who now salutes your Manes. Be at peace.

(*A cloud covers the moon. Darkness.*)

## MALCOLM TAYLOR

### EVEN-SONG

**S**WIFTLY, O swiftly descend,  
With thy silvery music of pinions,  
Spirit of Even, and blend  
In the cup of thy azure dominions  
Wine of the red sun's dying  
With milk of the new moon lying  
Pale in the arms of the old.  
O pluck from the Night's dark river  
Foam-stars, silver and gold, "  
To be kindled by darts from thy quiver  
Archeress, goddess and giver,  
Gather the day to thy fold.

Thou who dost mingle the light  
Of the moon with the gleam of the glowing  
Stars in the palace of night,  
When the rubied west at thy going  
Droops like a withering flower  
A lover hath stript from its bower,  
Sweet as the music and mirth  
Of the waves of the sea in their meeting  
Rings over heaven and earth  
The delight and the joy of thy greeting,  
Maiden, sustainer and sweetening,  
Bring thou the night unto birth.

## EVEN-SONG

Low as the prattle of leaves  
Or the rushing of rain on the rafter  
Under the darkening eaves  
Of the heavens, the lilt of thy laughter  
Sounds on the wind as thou goest;  
Caresses alone thou knowest—  
Only thy fingers and thou—  
To bestow, I feel as a tender  
Garland of gold on my brow,  
And a vestment of beauty and splendour:  
Guardian, fairest befriender,  
Swiftly descend to me now.

Haste to the watcher that waits  
For the wind of thy wings in their beating;  
Open the east's barred gates  
To the waters of night in thy fleeting,  
Sealing with balm of thy fingers  
The eye of the sun as he lingers.  
Slip from thy star-woven dress  
And thy loveliness, Spirit, discover;  
Loose each dusk-hued tress  
And above me on wind-wings hover,  
Mistress and lady and lover,  
Granting thy gentlest caress.

E. WYNDHAM TENNANT

HOME THOUGHTS IN LAVENTIE

GREEN gardens in Laventie!  
Soldiers only know the street  
Where the mud is churned and splashed about  
By battle-wending feet;  
And yet beside one stricken house there is a glimpse of  
grass,

Look for it when you pass.

Beyond the church whose pitted spire  
Seems balanced on a strand  
Of swaying stone and tottering brick,<sup>c</sup>  
Two roofless ruins stand,  
And here behind the wreckage where the black wall  
should have been

We found a garden green.

The grass was never trodden on,  
The little path of gravel  
Was overgrown with celandine,  
No other folk did travel  
Along its weedy surface, but the nimble-footed mouse  
Running from house to house.

So all among the vivid blades  
Of soft and tender grass  
We lay, nor heard the limber wheels  
That pass and ever pass,  
In noisy continuity until their stony rattle  
Seems in itself a battle.

## HOME THOUGHTS

At length we rose up from this ease  
Of tranquil happy mind,  
And searched the garden's little length  
A fresh pleasaunce to find;  
And there, some yellow daffodils & jasmine hanging high  
Did rest the tired eye.

The fairest and most fragrant  
Of the many sweets we found  
Was a little bush of Daphne flower  
Upon a grassy mound,  
And so thick were the blossoms set & so divine the scent  
That we were well content.

Hungry for Spring I bent my head,  
The perfume fanned my face,  
And all my soul was dancing  
In that little lovely place,  
Dancing with a measured step from wrecked & shattered  
towns  
Away . . . upon the Downs.

I saw green banks of daffodil,  
Slim poplars in the breeze,  
Great tan-brown hares in gusty March  
A-courting on the leas;  
And meadows with their glittering streams, and silver  
scurrying dace,  
Home . . . what a perfect place!

KATHARINE TYNAN

THE CHILDLESS WOMAN

THE children she had missed,  
That never yet had birth,  
Unwarmed, unfed, unkind,  
Soured all her joy of earth.  
But when her day was done  
And none was desolate,  
Dusty and all alone,  
She knocked at Heaven's gate,  
Birds from a parapet  
Called to her clear and shrill;  
With 'Mother! Mother!' so wild and sweet,  
And they were never still.  
They were no birds at all  
But children small and bright;  
When she came past the high wall  
They were as birds in flight.  
One was clasping her hand;  
One was hugging her gown;  
The littlest one of all the band  
She lifted nor set him down.  
Her hungry heart and cold  
Was filled full and to spare:  
One had her feet to hold,  
One was kissing her hair.  
The heart in her side  
Forgot the ancient wrong:  
When 'Mother! Mother! Mother!' they cried,  
It soared like a bird's song.

## THE CHILDLESS WOMAN

Her arms were full of children,  
As they were birds in nest.  
The littlest one crept softly in,  
So he lay on her breast.  
God's people passing by,  
They smiled at her heart's ease;  
'The mother of many children,  
Her flowers grow to her knees.'  
They dance, they laugh, they run,  
She laughs with them at play;  
Their pleasures are not done,  
Nor their sweet holiday.  
When they lie down at night,  
Soft pillows, downiest beds,  
Her arms are full of her birds bright,  
Dark heads and golden heads.  
She draws them close to her,  
Lest haply it should seem  
That the new life in some wild fear  
Was a dream—but a dream.



KATHARINE TYNAN  
THE ASS OF HEAVEN

IF I WAS like St Francis,  
As no such thing am I,  
I'd give to folk of Heaven  
A name to call me by,  
The Ass of Christ, my haster  
In lands beyond the sky.  
If I could bear as meekly  
Stumbling up-hill my load,  
As he, my four-foot brother,  
Innured to curse and rod,  
'Twould not so ill unseem me  
To be the Ass of God.  
If I could stand so patient,  
In scourging wind and rain,  
And bear so uncomplaining  
The bitter ways of man;  
To be the Ass of Heaven  
Would be my glory then.  
But I, so cold, so froward,  
So fain of my own will,  
Hating the load I carry,  
Aware of every hill!  
Make me like this small brother,  
Kind and forgiving still!  
If like the honest brother  
I bore the blame and shame,  
The Cross between my shoulders  
To show Whose ass I am,  
The folk of Heaven might hail me  
The Ass of Christ by name.

SHERARD VINES  
LITTLE GREY DEVIL

**L**ITTLE grey devil as light as a cloud,  
Cold as the hour before dawn in a swamp,  
Lurker about in a market-day crowd,  
Rat of cathedral and theatre and camp,  
Driver of sheep from the fold on the hill,  
Little grey devil went out to do ill.

Mud-trodden pastures with dabbles of red  
Rubbish and earth mounds, and cunningly hid  
Rattle-tongued murderers spewing out lead,  
Men getting forward to do as they're bid,  
Men very quiet, men screaming with pain—  
Little grey devil crept out in the rain.

There's a fine fellow comes racing along,  
Two friends with him, keen to be in at the death;  
One's down in the dirt with his leg folded wrong;  
One's choked with his blood, and one stops to take breath  
Red in his eyeballs, and sweat on his brow:  
Run devil! Run devil! After him now.

Put your cold finger right into his heart,  
Make him feel sick with your breath in his mouth;  
Great body cringes, and lips fall apart:  
Run like a harried beast, run without ruth!  
Christ! how the slim bullets whimper and whack:  
Good devil! Rare devil! Ride on his back!

Satan has smiled from the height of his throne;  
Satan has laughed from the floor of his pit,  
And the damned raise a cheer. But a sigh or a groan  
Is more sad than the sound which is likeliest to it.  
Clap him and cheer him as loud as you can;  
Little grey devil has ruined a man!

WILLOUGHBY WEAVING  
BOAR'S HILL

THE Knight of Wootton harked to the tale,  
And his eyes grew bright and his face grew hale,  
And he cried with his great glad voice of old  
To his ready Page in buff and gold:  
'Call me huntsman and horse and hound,  
And wind me the horn with a merry sound!  
For they say a boar has showed his teeth  
Among the thickets of Tommy's Heath;  
And we will hunt, through glade and fell,  
Over the hills to Sunningwell.'

The Knight of Wootton gat him to horse,  
And they beat the woods and they beat the gorse.  
They hunted far and they hunted wide,  
But never a tusky boar they spied.  
They rode by Chillswell to Oxenford,  
And the hounds turned back of their own accord.  
They stirred the hart and they stirred the hare  
Over the Hurst. No scent was there.  
And they rode and scattered, as it befell,  
Over the hills to Sunningwell.

The Knight of Wootton checked his roan  
Close on the hounds. He rode alone.  
—For he saw them lean their muzzles blue,  
And pause as they rushed the thickets through.  
He heard them mutter, he heard them break,  
And he laughed aloud at the musical sound.  
He saw their bristling chines awake;  
Merrily his horn he wound,  
And cleared the shallow brook at a bound,  
And laid his mare out low and long

## BOAR'S HILL

Over the mossy crackling ground.  
He followed fast, for the scent was strong;  
And he laughed aloud at the musical sound.

The Knight of Wootton was old and gray,  
Haggard and sick and woebegone;  
But you had said he was young that day  
As he rode ahead and he rode alone.  
For his cheek was ruddy, his eye was bright,  
And he sate in the saddle firm and light;  
And his mighty back was no more bowed,  
And his breast grew broad as he laughed aloud,  
Tossing his tasselled hunting-cap;  
And he held his spear without a strap  
With hand as firm as a boy's might be  
—A hand that a breeze had seemed to blow,  
Blow like the branch of a poplar tree  
But few short dismal hours ago.  
And he tarred his hounds with words of grace,  
And he leaned to his mare's pricked ears to tell  
Sooth and praise, as she kept her pace,  
Galloping up from Sunningwell.

The Knight of Wootton breathed again,  
And his heart came back to him that day;  
And only he drew the bridle rein  
When the hounds had brought their foe to bay,  
And the boar hunched there had showed his teeth  
Down in the hollow by Tommy's Heath,  
And torn the hounds as they made assay.  
He patted his panting mare, and leaped,  
Lightly leaped from the saddle bow,  
Where men had lifted him old and heaped  
But few short dismal hours ago.

## BOAR'S HILL

And he ran through the bleeding hounds and smote,  
Strongly smote with his mighty spear,  
The boar to heart through his bristly coat,  
'Twixt jowl and shoulder clean and clear.

Then a moment he leaned on the quivering shaft,  
A moment brief, and lightly laughed,  
And slowly bended his hoary head  
And over the stricken boar fell dead.

And the hounds came round and licked his hands,  
And the roan mare whinnied, sad to tell,  
And there came a sound of his hunting bands  
Gathering up from Sunningwell.

The Knight of Wootton was old and dead  
When Ralph, the Huntsman, lifted him up.  
'This was the death to die!' he said,  
And shook from his eye the heavy drop.  
Then he put his horn to his lips a-cold,  
And a mournful huntsman's call he wound;  
And the slender Page in buff and gold  
Wept aloud at the musical sound:  
—Wept aloud, though his heart was bold  
And long had chidden the gathered tear;  
And he hid not now the tears that rolled  
As he kissed the lips of his master dear.

The Knight of Wootton is armed and laid  
In the Chappelle old by Lamborough Hill,  
And his face looks happy and unafraid  
In the candle light so tall and still.  
At his head shall be a carven hound,  
At his feet a boar.—But they ring the bell,  
And far is carried the musical sound  
Over the hills to Sunningwell.

WILLOUGHBY WEAVING  
MOMENTS OF VISION

· **B**Y whispering sounds of waves and trees,  
And by those pregnant silences  
That follow or precede the storm,  
By eloquence of scent and form,  
By tenderness of creatures' eyes  
And grace of all that creeps or flies,  
I have been haunted, wrought upon,  
Enchanted, till my joy was gone,  
And all the world beneath my feet  
Fading with every vision sweet  
Had left me in a loneliness  
That none, who have not shared, could guess.

And I stood fearfully and felt  
All senses from my being melt,  
My native soul stand stripped and bare  
Before a Recognition there,  
Invisible eyes whose burning gaze  
Outshone the great sun's brightest rays,  
And on my soul alighting, first  
Wrung it like a thing accursed  
With shame, and then with tender power  
Drew it outwards like a flower  
To see with mild undazzled eye  
Beauty herself there standing by.

By tempestuous sounds, no less  
Of massy strength and mighty stress,  
Of straining forests, and the cry  
Of winds and waves in agony,  
I have been lifted, rapt afar  
In splendour like a falling star,

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Kindling with speed my native spark  
In fiery flight from dark to dark  
Through joy's keen atmosphere; and then  
Plunging into void again,  
Extinguished, fearful, and undone,  
Have yearned for self-oblivion.

For in that brief and brilliant race  
Of joy, that momentary space  
Of light, that burning swift access  
I have been close to Loveliness,  
And seen the end of all desire,  
That Peace! enlightened by the fire,  
Of my own fervour for a span  
Short but enough to heed and scan  
Her Beauty. Never have I been  
Closer to her nor clearer seen,  
Save when the lamps of pity shine  
Within my heart upon her shrine.

Ah! would that I might stand and gaze  
On Beauty's self for all my days,  
And nought of earth so soon surprise  
And blind from inner sight my eyes!  
Or would that these brief tranced spells  
Were made the longer intervals,  
And rarely, swiftly, hardly seen,  
The things of earth should flash between!  
And, oh, that I might still increase  
My gleam of joy, my glimpse of Peace!  
Or Pity's lamps more constant shone  
Within my heart her shrine upon!

HUMBERT WOLFE

THE LITTLE SLEEPER

**T**HIS little sleeper, who was overtaken  
By death, as one child overtakes another,  
Dreams by his side all night and will not waken  
Till the dawn comes in heaven with his mother.



## HUMBERT WOLFE

### PIERROT

**M**Y friend Pierrot your sleeves are far too long.  
Look! I can hardly find at all your hands.

And all your cotton tunic is cut wrong,  
And what your eyes mean no one understands.

Ah yes, Pierrette, my sleeves are far too long.

Ah yes, *Pierrette, you cannot find my hands,*  
But better so than Pierrot did you wrong  
By telling you what no one understands.

My friend Pierrot you fear to take the light,  
Look! I can hardly see at all your face.

And what I see, Pierrot is very white.  
Are you afraid? Ashamed? or in disgrace?

Ah yes, Pierrette, I dare not take the light.

Ah yes, *Pierrette, you cannot see my face.*  
My candle died with love, and in the night  
Oh! Harlequin, Pierrette, is my disgrace.

My friend Pierrot it seems that things go ill  
With you. Look! I can hardly hear your word,  
And the dark shadow round grows darker still,  
And a new voice which is not yours is heard.

Ah yes, Pierrette, it seems that things go ill.

Ah yes, *Pierrette, you cannot hear my word.*  
And the dark shadow which grows darker still  
Is death, Pierrette, of which you have not heard.

